

Standard 6-6

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the age of European exploration and settlement in the New World.

6-6.3 Illustrate the exchange of plants, animals, diseases, and technology throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas (known as the Columbian Exchange), and explain the effect on people of these regions. (G, E)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

The term “Columbian Exchange” has not been taught prior to this Indicator. However, in 4th grade, students explained the exchange of plant life, animal life, and disease that resulted from exploration of the New World (4.1-4).

In 7th grade, students will explain how technological and scientific advances affected various parts of the world politically, socially, and economically and contributed to the power of European nations (7-1.2).

In Global Studies, students will explain the economic and cultural impact of European involvement on other continents during the era of European expansion (GS-4.2).

In US History, students will summarize the distinct characteristics of each colonial region in the settlement and development of America, including religious, social, political, and economic differences (USHC-1.1).

It is essential for students to know that the so-called “Columbian Exchange” was a mixed blessing. For the most part, the grains, tropical fruits, and coffee that came to the Western Hemisphere from Europe and Asia enriched diets and provided extensive employment. The livestock (pigs, sheep, cattle, and chickens) likewise were a benefit to this continent, and horses brought about a radical improvement in the lifestyle of Great Plains Native Americans. On the other hand, as Europeans began to cultivate agriculture in the New World they developed and became dependent upon large-scale slavery. Initially, Europeans attempted to enslave Native Americans, but when that system failed, they began to import African slaves to meet the labor needs. The movement of Africans to the New World as slaves became the largest forced migration in history. While a broader, more stable diet helped many Native Americans, there were also large groups of many indigenous peoples wiped out by European diseases (smallpox and measles) to which they had no resistance. Likewise, diseases of the west were brought back to Europe but none of these had the impact that smallpox and measles had on Native Americans. Like many other products, European firearms and gunpowder provided a mixed blessing. The superior European technology allowed them to conquer much of the land in the Western Hemisphere despite inferior numbers. The introduction of these weapons into New World culture did allow for improved hunting.

It is essential for students to know that many foods from the Western Hemisphere benefited Europe and Asia. Potatoes and corn became especially beneficial contributions to improved nutrition and health and increased population. Tomatoes and chocolate became wildly popular

commodities in other parts of the world. On the negative side of the exchange, potatoes came to be relied on so heavily in Ireland that a potato blight touched off a famine that led to a massive emigration to the United States in the 19th century. Additionally, while tobacco became a great source of wealth for early colonies, most today would consider the introduction and development of this resource with its related health problems to represent a negative impact.

It is not essential for students to know all of the items that were part of the Columbian Exchange.

Assessment guidelines: In order to measure understanding of the Columbian Exchange, appropriate assessments will require the student to **recognize** items from one culture that were introduced and adopted for use by another culture. Students should be able to **analyze** the impact of these exchanges and determine the impact on recipient cultures. It would be appropriate to require students to choose and defend which resources were most beneficial and/or destructive. Students could be asked to **analyze** the long-term and short-term consequences of the specific items of the Columbian Exchange. Additionally students could be required to **classify** types of items exchanged – i.e. human, raw materials, technology, etc. Finally, it would be suitable to have students **explain** the differences between voluntary and involuntary exchanges and the impact of these exchanges.